

DETAILED ACTION

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Eckhard H. Kuesters (Registration No. 28,870) on April 27, 2005. The application has been amended as follows:

In the claims:

Claim 1, line 4, replace "the width" with --a width--

Claim 1, line 6, replace "portions;" with --portions, and calculating a widthwise dimension of the reference pattern from the edge points;--

Claim 1, line 12, replace "the width" with --a width--

Claim 1, line 12, replace "said edge points" with --said edge points of the pattern under inspection--

Claim 1, line 13, after "with respect to" delete "the"

Claim 1, line 15, replace "said edge points" with --said edge points of the pattern under inspection--

Claim 12, line 12, replace "the width" with --a width--

Claim 12, line 18, replace "the pattern" with --a pattern--

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A size checking method comprising:
 - 2 a first step of reading image data on a reference pattern and recognizing an edge
 - 3 direction of the reference pattern on the basis of pixel values detected at edge portions which
 - 4 are end portions as viewed in the width direction of the reference pattern;
 - 5 a second step of detecting edge points corresponding to the end portions as sub-pixels
 - 6 on the basis of the pixel values detected at the edge portions;
 - 7 a third step of acquiring image data on a pattern under inspection;
 - 8 a fourth step of ~~reading the image data on the pattern under inspection and~~
 - 9 ~~calculating a widthwise dimension of the pattern under inspection, from edge portions located~~
 - 10 ~~at the same position as the edge portion whose widthwise dimension is calculated by use of~~
 - 11 ~~the reference pattern]~~ detecting edge points at each of edge portions which are end portions as
 - 12 viewed in the width direction of the pattern under inspection, (said edge points being detected
with respect to the edge portions located at the same position as the edge portions whose
widthwise dimension is calculated by use of the reference pattern, and of calculating the
widthwise dimension of the pattern under inspection, with the edge points as starting points;
[[and]]
 - a fifth step of determining whether or not the pattern under inspection is defective on the basis of the widthwise dimension of the reference pattern and the widthwise dimension of the pattern under inspection;
 - a sixth step of preparing a frequency distribution with respect to a dimensional error
obtained on the basis of the widthwise dimension of the reference pattern and the widthwise
dimension of the pattern under inspection, and varying a threshold value used in the second
step when the edge points are detected as sub-pixels;
said fifth step including,